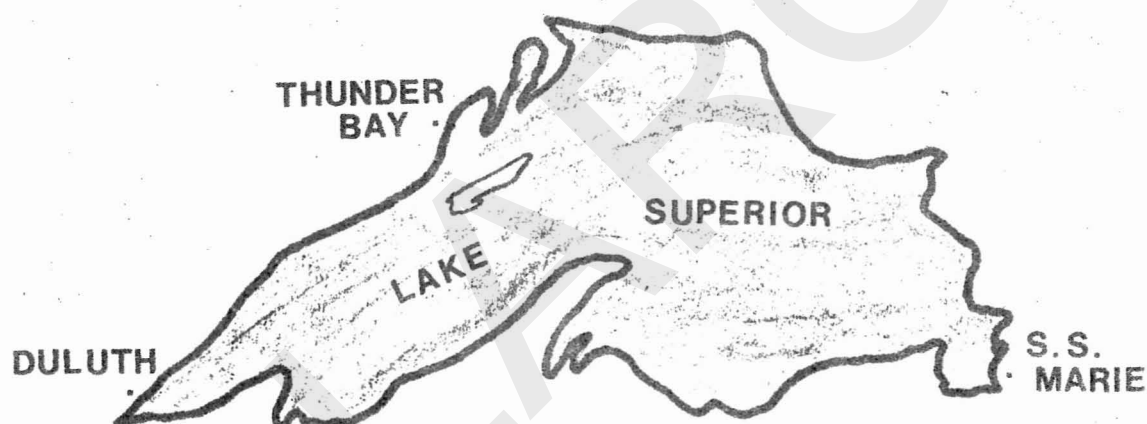


HI-Q

APR - - 1988

LAKEHEAD AMATEUR RADIO CLUB BULLETIN



REPEATERS

TBR 146.82

YQT 147.06

CLUB STATION

VE3FW

FOUNDED 1934

INCORPORATED 1979

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE LAKEHEAD AMATEUR RADIO CLUB WILL BE HELD ON
APRIL 14, 1988 AT THE E.M.O. BUILDING, CORNER OF VICTORIA AND BALMORAL
AT 7:30 P.M. COFFEE AND DONUTS SERVED.

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THE PREZ SEZ

Hello to everyone and hope you are all enjoying what is left of our winter. I do not have a whole lot to talk about this month. The Sibley Ski Tour went off without a hitch and thanks goes out to John-VE3OTC for organizing it. Thanks also goes out to all the operators who helped out: Bill-VE3LMV, Greg-VE3PHK, Lindo-VE3NHX, Barb-VE3ZRX, Jeff-VE3PHT, Glen-VE3JAU and Gwen-VE3TRE. Everyones help was greatly appreciated and the organizers of the Sibley Ski Tour were most impressed with our performance.

Our VHF to UHF link and phone patch is at the final stages of completion. Laurie-VE3BCD is estimating about 8 to 10 hours of work left on it when I brought it to him. I helped Laurie out with it by building the cabinet and doing all the metal work, fitting and installing the radio's patch and other components and wiring in the above. I would estimate that I put at least 60 hours into this project and I would like everyone to realize that it is ridiculous to leave a project like this for one person to complete. Laurie needed help with this and I did my best to accomodate him. Many projects on the club repeaters can only be worked on by one person at a time but if everyone helps out when required we will see things get done lot quicker and with less of a burden on our repeater repair people VE3BCD and VE3HTM.

I am hoping that we will have the new link and patch up and running at the club station VE3FW by the April meeting. When this project is complete here is what will have been improved on VE3YQT repeater.

1. We have the new UHF link receiver built by Bill = VE3XJ up and running at Mount Baldy. It was installed last fall.
2. The new link transmitter & patch which will be located at VE3FW will eliminate the need for Laurie-VE3BCD's amplifier which is currently being used on the UHF link.
3. The phone line at Laurie's can be disconnected and the club can start utilizing the phone line at VE3FW. This also means that we will have one less phone bill to pay.
4. The commercial patch we will be using will give us the following features:
 - a) reverse patch (dial in)
 - b) regenerated touch tones onto the phone line
 - c) unlimited activity timer
 - d) re-dial
 - e) emergency phone numbers in a speed dial ie. OPP etc.
 - f) toll dial restrict & selective dial restrict

PREZ SEZ (cont'd)

5. When complete in the near future, we will have battery back-up on the link & phone patch in the case of a power failure. (We do not have this now and if we lose commercial power at Laurie's and TBR then we do not have a phone patch on either repeater)

NOTE: All the telephone exchanges have alternate power sources
ie. Generators - battery banks etc.

This is something to keep in mind in the event of a disaster as we do have battery back up on VE3YQT repeater itself up at Mount Baldy.

6. Something to look forward to: I approached Thunder Bay Telephone about a phone line up at Mount Baldy and in talking with the engineering department they informed me that they have plans on paper now to run a fibre optics cable up to Mount Baldy. They have more than enough future subscribers but the stumbling block is of course money. They have a projected date of between 1990 to 1993. The commercial patch we have could then be used on the hill eliminating the need for the entire UHF link.

Once the patch is up and running at VE3FW, we will be looking into our troublesome intermittent noise problem on VE3YQT. Assistance will be needed from members to solve this problem and an RF study is going to be organized. Once we find the problem scientifically we can look at ways of curing it.

A volunteer is needed to build a receive antenna on 147.06 for the link (ie. 1/4 wave ground plane). It will be set up at VE3FW along with the UHF YAGI. VOLUNTEERS are also needed to build a mounting base for the UHF antenna and we need volunteers to help set this equipment up at the club station VE3FW. Anyone interested in helping can contact me either on 2 M or at home 767-0098.

Speaking of volunteers, Glen VE3JAU and Lindo VE3NHX have volunteered to help John VE3HTM replace and repackage the transmitter and receiver on VE3TBR. We have all the equipment on hand and we can look forward to seeing the repeater working normally again in the near future.
Thanks guys.

Still on the topic of volunteers, anyone interested in building an 80M dipole and 40 M dipole for field day and ARES can contact me. Two antennas of good construction are necessary and we should have them sitting ready in the event of an emergency or call up.

I talked with Don MacKenzie, E.M.O. Co-ordinator for the City of Thunder Bay this past week and I will share what we discussed with all members at the next club meeting on April 14.

Well I guess that is about it for now. See you at the April club meeting.

73's James St. Cyr - VE3JSC

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING MARCH 10, 1988

Meeting called to order at 7:45 P.M.

- correspondence was read
- financial statement was read
- motion to accept financial statement by OTC, seconded by BCD
- motion carried

OLD BUSINESS

- discussion on sponsorship of licences
- motion that Tom CX, sign over license sponsorship to John HIM by KRV, seconded by ECV, motion carried.
- report on Sibley Ski Tour by OTC

NEW BUSINESS

- report was given on Polar Ski Trek by OTC
- motion to close meeting by XJ, seconded by JAJ, carried at 8:30 P.M.
- Greg PHK name was drawn for the 50/50 draw. He wasn't there to claim it.

Swap night was held after the meeting.

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FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 1988

Opening Balance		\$2,788.18
REVENUE:		
Donation	\$ 10.00	
Dues	20.00	
Supper Revenue	383.66	
	<u>\$413.66</u>	
EXPENSES:		
Door prize from club	100.00	
" " " 50/50 draw	135.00	
Supper & Hall	350.00	
Coffee & Supplies-glasses	11.80	
Stationary Sibley Ski	11.40	
	<u>\$608.20</u>	
DIFFERENCE		194.54
NEW BALANCE		<u>\$2,593.64</u>

STATEMENT FOR SUPPER ON FEB. 20, 1988

TOTAL REVENUE (Raffle, Tickets, Door & Liquor)		\$578.00
EXPENSES:		
Hall rental & food	\$350.00	
Alcohol & Licence	152.60	
Soft Drinks & Supplies	41.84	
	<u>544.44</u>	
DIFFERENCE		<u>\$ 33.66</u>

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CLUBS REPEATERS

There are many new members in the club who may not be familiar with the history of the clubs repeaters, and since we have now gotten to the point where action is impossible, I thought I would fill everyone in on what has happened in the past. Perhaps this will shed some light on a few things, and why I and a few other people have pushed so hard for a new repeater, even though this is now not possible, given the attitude of the membership as a whole, assisted by the proddings and phone calls from a few members who do not wish to see the change, least someone else claim credit for what has transpired. Stacked meetings are hard to overlook, and only one point of view is difficult to question.

I have been a member since 1972, and as such, I remember the days when we had NO repeaters. No YQT, TBR, TBU - nothing. Back then, in 1974, the going rage was to use old tube type police radios, and modify them for use on 146.94 simplex (this was prior to 146.52 being declared a national simplex channel). There was a gathering of all interested persons at Pat's (VE3HFS) QTH, and at that time it was decided that a repeater was needed, and desirable. At that time, the FM Association was formed, with the idea of getting a machine on the air. Phil, VE3AXL is the person responsible for our prime RF location on Mount Baldy (thanks Phil!).

In checking back in old issues of HI-Q, the first mention of a repeater was in the Dec. 1973 issue, at which time it was reported work had commenced on the new machine. In the Sept. 1974 issue, antennas were being installed on Baldy (home brew) and there were no duplexers in use at this time. Troubleshooting and modifications were being done in order to make the machine operational. In Dec. (1974), mention of the repeaters new call sign (VE3YQT) was mentioned, and that the new repeater was still not on the air. In March 1975, we find the repeater in Ray Forslund's (VE3EDZ) basement with a blown regulator, and many blown IC's in it.

The repeater officially took to the air from Mount Baldy on June 4, 1975 at 2345Z, with VE3ANF and VE3OH having the honors of being the first persons to use it from its new site. At this time, mention of building another repeater, complete with UHF link was mentioned, along with antenna improvements for the site. The June 1977 issue finds the FM assoc. looking for \$400 to help with some much needed new equipment for VE3YQT. On Sat. Aug. 20, 1977, a Sinclair SKI-229 6 db Omni antenna was installed, and duplexers were on order, and were installed on Oct. 21st. At this time, there was talk of merging the FM Assoc. with the club, but it was decided that the FM Assoc. was a more flexible arrangement, so this plan was not followed through with.

In June, 1978, John, VE3HTM had his TRS-80 computer tied into the repeater and would play a pre-recorded announcement in anticipation of the new autopatch that was being worked on for VE3YQT. In Sept., an autopatch (of sorts) was made available, courtesy of John HTM. He was using his computer tied into the repeater, and it was necessary to run high power in order to override his uplink signal (on VHF) into the repeater. This also meant ALL calls had to be less than 3 min. duration, as there was no way to reset the repeaters timer. UHF duplexers were ordered in Oct. for use with the up and coming UHF link and autopatch.

In March 1979, we find the new repeater is nearing completion in Ray's (VE3EDZ) basement, but will undergo some further testing to ensure proper operation. In Nov. we find the repeater in Bill's (XJ) basement with touch tone troubles, but everything is working fine. In May of 1980, we find that VE3HTM's computer autopatch is still in operation.

I am unable to find details in HI-Q, but in this time period, VE3HTM moved to a new QTH, and decided that he would once again like exclusive use of his computer, and

HISTORY (cont'd)

Thunder Bay was once again without autopatch. In Sept. 1981, VE3TBR took to the air from my basement, and the Thunder Bay VHF Society was named as the owner. This was the original TBR, and has since gone that-a-way. Shortly thereafter, I undertook the task of building a new repeater, incorporating John-HTM's idea of using a computer. However this was taken one step further, and the computer controlled the ENTIRE repeater, not only the autopatch. This was completed in Aug. 1982, and Thunder Bay had its FIRST autopatch repeater.

I had well over \$1200 tied up in the repeater, and since the club was looking to purchase a repeater, it was sold at the Oct. meeting, with funds coming from the previous sale of a dish that the club owned. At this time, the new YQT was still being worked on, and VE3TBR was the only repeater with autopatch. With help from Ralph, VE3MZX, we were able to secure a location at St. Joseph's Heritage, and the repeater was moved to this site in May of 1983.

Sometime in late 1983, the FM Association was dissolved, and VE3YQT was handed over to the club. At that time, the new repeater was nearing completion, and would soon be on the air. The Autopatch would be coming to YQT as soon as the new repeater was on the air. This is important to note - VE3TBR was on the air (and owned by the club), complete with a working autopatch, PRIOR to VE3YQT being handed over to the club. HI-Q bears out this fact, and I mention it as it seems some people wish to rewrite history.

At this point, I will leave HI-Q, as I am quite familiar with what happened after this point. Elections were held in Sept. 1984, and I decided to run for president. My primary interest was to see the new YQT operating on Baldy with autopatch, and to upgrade TBR, as the TRS-80 that was (and still is) in use had some limitations that I wished to improve upon.

In Feb., I called a special meeting of the club with the goal of purchasing a new repeater for YQT. The "new" one had been in the building stage for (going on) 10 years and the long awaited and much promised autopatch was nowhere to be seen. I wanted a new repeater, new call, and a change of frequencies for YQT to cleanse the club of its predicament. Progress the old way was not possible, and a firm plan of action was needed. As things turned out, an ultimatum was issued. Put the new YQT on the hill, complete with autopatch, or ELSE! It worked. By the March meeting, the new repeater was in place. Perish the thought of wasting "all those years of work, and putting up a NEW repeater, when the one WE were working on was ALMOST ready to go!"

This is the repeater that is now YQT, and I can hear it now "it was a rush job - no wonder it don't work right!" Sorry - I don't buy it. It took 10 years to see that machine in operation, and I don't call that "rushing things". So now we had two autopatches. Then, as now, you cannot make a call into the YQT autopatch, so a new idea was conceived. Both YQT and TBR would be switched over to Commodore 64 computers (which the club bought, along with a 1541 disk drive), and I went to work writing the necessary software to do the job. It took me 8 months to do it, and it was a masterpiece.

It had an unlimited speed dial capabilities, touch tone muting, reverse autopatch, courtesy beep - everything we could ever want or need, and it was something I was (and still am) very proud of. I was able to test my software on the YQT link in the spring of 1986 to confirm it worked as expected. You should know how advanced we were at this Point. The new controller could do everything ANY commercial controller could do (I stole a few ideas from them), and I was constantly asking for ideas that people wanted incorporated, or features that they had heard on other repeaters. To this day, there

HISTORY (cont'd)

is not a controller of this nature available and I dare say it will be a long time before one is. With the new controller, there were a few hardware problems which I documented, and left this task to another person. Feeling everything was in place, I stepped down at the June meeting when elections were held, and that was when the trouble started (to say the least.)

Our new president did not like the idea of a courtesy beep on YQT, or any of the other features in this new controller that I had built, so he put the computers UP FOR SALE! I was shocked, to say the least. I had spent 8 months on the software alone, and he was ready to throw it all away! As things turned out, our president resigned two months into his term, and the reins were handed over to the vice president. He was able to smooth over a few trouble spots, but the damage had been done.

In Jan. of 1987, all repeater repair personnel were asked to submit a "wish list" for items that were needed for the repeaters. I was looking after VE3TBR as I had done since the day I sold it (with the club paying the bills). My personal philosophy was that the club did not have a lot of money to spend, and I made do with what was available. My preference was to make software do most of the work, and keep the hardware to a minimum. It made for more versatility, and for fewer problems, as there was not as much hardware to break down. With this in mind, I submitted my list. I was looking for around \$1200 for a new duplexer, and some other repairs, while the YQT guys asked for around \$3,000 (or some such figure).

In the end, I lost out. No money for TBR, and lots for YQT. This was too much for me - first my software is thrown away, and then the club refuses to spend ANY money on TBR. I was devastated, so I took the only option available, and resigned from the repeater committee. Sorry, but I can't do much on my own with the club refusing funding.

I had spent many YEARS of MY time, devoted to making TBR the best it could be, and it was great. Just ask anyone if they can remember any problems that were not fixed in short order, and in the 5 years I looked after it, the repeater was off the air for a total of one day (it was a Sunday, and all the stores were closed, so I was unable to get the parts I needed for the repairs). From my point of view, repeater problems should receive prompt attention, and they did. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for YQT, as numerous times it had gone for weeks and months waiting repairs, with the answer being "I'll fix it when I get around to it". (This quote was heard on the air on YQT in reply to a question as to when a problem with the repeater would be fixed.) How soon we all forget....

To me, the final insult came just a few days ago. I was "informed" by our president that my services as licence sponsor were no longer required, and a new person had been named to the position. I was not asked, I was INFORMED of this, and as of now, I have now handed in my final resignation.

I joined the Lakehead Amateur Radio Club back in 1972 with great expectations about Amateur Radio, and wanting to get involved, see things happen, and move technology forward. It has become painfully obvious to me, and many others in whose footsteps I follow, that I now retire from having an active interest in the club to pursuing other interests where my efforts are appreciated. I no longer have any interest in the club, its repeaters or its activities. I leave a broken man. I will probably pay my dues just to keep abreast of things, but my involvement will end there. This is the thanks I get for my efforts on behalf of the club, and I should mention - I am not the first who has suffered a similar fate because of the clubs repeaters.

HISTORY (cont'd)

During my years as a member, the club has had no less than three (yes, THREE) opportunities to purchase a new repeater for Baldy. You just blew another chance (even if you never knew it, but from the words spoken at the Sunday repeater meeting by the few who thought it was important enough to show up made it quite clear that they are happy the way YQT is currently operating.) It is quite obvious to me now that I was wasting my time and energy believing that progress was possible. A few outspoken members seem to have little difficulty getting their point across that YQT is "sacred land" and none shall touch or trespass there. Everything is fine on Baldy, and a new repeater will operate the same or worse as the current YQT (or so they would have us think).

I don't believe the "RF alley" stories that seem to abound. If such were the case, then the commercial repeaters now in operation there would also be noisy and crackling. Such is not the case - just ask Motorola if they are using a home brew repeater on Baldy for their commercial customers. I can assure you that commercial equipment is now working fine in worse RF sites.

Take Duluth for example. One tower has EIGHTEEN different services on it, including two television transmitters, FM and all the rest, and there are no ill effects from the "RF alley". This is in an area congested with towers, repeaters, AM and FM transmitters, and many, many radio services. There is so much intermod present that commercial gear is the ONLY equipment that will work properly in this environment. Mount Baldy is nowhere near this level of RF saturation, yet this is consistently the named culprit whenever the repeater burps or hiccups.

A lot of effort by a lot of people has gone into putting YQT on the air, and they deserve a lot of credit for their efforts. However, enough is enough. When will the members of this club realize that commercial gear (although it does break down on occasion) is going to be one heck of a lot better than what is now on Baldy? For me, the time has come. I can no longer wait for the day to see a new repeater on the hill, and I have received my final insult for my efforts from the club.

I was under the mistaken impression for many years that my efforts would be appreciated in some small way. Boy, was I mistaken. Every effort to improve things gets twisted and turned (and I am sure this article will be as well) to make it look like I am attempting something bad (like see a new repeater on Mount Baldy, and "throw away ALLLLLLL those years of work"). This now famous quote is now replaced by "Its working as best it can." Believe what you will, but we have been down this road many times before, and until the members of this club decide that they have had enough, we will go down this well beaten path many times again.

I leave you to figure your way out, around, or through your repeater dilemma. I refuse to accept any additional insults for my efforts on the club's behalf, and I have now resigned myself to the fact that a few vocal people are able to control the membership, and that they are free to do as they please with the club's repeaters. Should their line of thinking be questioned, "THAT PERSON" (a quote from a recent meeting) is held up for public ridicule and scorn for their efforts. So much for the Amateur EXPERIMENTAL Service where the name of the game is experimentation and keeping abreast of modern technology. Such things seem to be like foreign agents to the club as it now exists.

My mentors have won their victory (or so they think), but I feel it is a hollow victory indeed when threats must be made to see action, it takes YEARS to see progress (13 years and counting) and people that wish to see things move forward are labelled as the "bad guys". So be it. I leave you to your precious monument that has not worked properly since the day it was installed. In a way, I feel that the final vic-

HISTORY (cont'd)

tory is mine. . . .I don't have to get involved anymore, and to me, that is the sweetest victory of all!

Pardon me for being a little sarcastic with my remarks, but what I have stated above has been well documented in Hi-Q over a good many years, and I am sure that a good many people will be happy to verify what I have stated here as being correct. Most YQT opponents have since left the club, leaving the old guard to watch over their precious monument, laying in wait for the next person who should happen to utter a bad word against YQT and "all those years of work". I have tried my best to move this club forward, but the anchor is secure, and the year is 1974. The club is going to build a "super repeater" complete with linking and autopatch, and nothing, and no one will stand in the way of this goal. Time is of secondary importance, performance even lower on the list of priorities, all in the name of saying "We did it - it took (30) years, but we did it!"

I have grown weary of the task before me, and the time has come for me to join my many friends who tried their best, and failed trying to pry the anchor loose. The ship is sinking, but no one seems to care, for the anchor secure, and in this club, thats all that REALLY matters.

TOM - VE3CX

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FOR SALE:

Vista III-R regulated 12 volt 3 amp power supply.

Call Gerry at 807-577-3575.

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SPECIAL NOTICE:

VE3JAB Bob Bishop can be heard on CBQ Radio every Friday morning at 6:50 A.M. talking about Ham Radio

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